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TO USIA WASHDC 3925  
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USIA P/G-ROMERSTEIN; TV/WPI AR-GLYCKMAN

STATE FOR ARA/CAR; INR/ID DAS BAILEY

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.  
☒ Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny ☒ Declassify  
Date 11/27/02 Exemption           

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PROP, US, DR  
SUBJECT: PROBABLE DISINFORMATION STORY ON U.S. "SPY  
PLANE" PILOT; MISSION RESPONSE

REFS: A) SANTO DOMINGO 8325, B) BRENNAN/  
LEVENTHAL (P/G) TELECON 8/28/87, C) SANTO DOMINGO 8782

1. (C) BEGIN SUMMARY: ANOTHER APPARENT SOVIET-INSPIRED  
DISINFORMATION STORY, THIS TIME ON A USAF CREWMAN REFUSING  
TO FLY OVER NICARAGUA, HAS APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PRESS.  
FIVE APPARENT DISINFORMATION ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED HERE  
IN THE FRINGE LOW-CIRCULATION PRESS WITHIN THE PAST MONTH,  
BUT NO SUCH ARTICLES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED BY THE SIGNIFICANT  
AND WIDELY-READ PRESS. THE POST WILL NOT RESPOND PUBLICLY  
TO THE STORIES AT THIS TIME BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD GREATLY  
INCREASE THEIR AUDIENCE, BUT WE WILL UNDERTAKE A DISCREET  
CAMPAIGN TO LIMIT THE FUTURE NUMBER AND IMPACT OF THESE  
ARTICLES. END SUMMARY.

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2. (U) POST HAS UNCOVERED ANOTHER POSSIBLE  
DISINFORMATION STORY IN SANTO DOMINGO'S "EL NUEVO  
DIARIO", A SMALL, UNSOPHISTICATED LOW-CIRCULATION  
DAILY. THE PIECE COMES IN THE FORM OF A WELL-WRITTEN,  
CAREFULLY-CRAFTED EDITORIAL IN THE AUGUST 26 EDITION OF  
"NUEVO DIARIO" (CIR. 10,000) ENTITLED "THE DESERTION OF  
AN AMERICAN SOLDIER". THE AUTHOR, A MR. ROBERTO  
ESTRADA, DESCRIBES A U.S. AIR FORCE SERGEANT, NAMED  
DANIEL COBOS, WHO SUPPOSEDLY REFUSED TO TAKE PART IN  
"SPY MISSIONS" OVER NICARAGUA, AND INSTEAD WENT TO THE  
U.S. MEDIA TO REVEAL HIS CONCERNS. ESTRADA CITES AS HIS  
SOURCE AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY A PROFESSOR BRUCE JOHANSEN,  
A FACULTY MEMBER AT THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES,

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA. IN THE JOHANSEN INTERVIEW, COBOS SUPPOSEDLY CLAIMS THAT HE WAS PART OF A SPECIAL CORPS OF AVIATORS WHO CONDUCTED CLANDESTINE FLIGHTS OUT OF "OFFUTT AIRBASE" TO COLLECT INTELLIGENCE DATA FOR THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND, THE CIA, THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE "CONTRAS". THE ESTRADA PIECE ALSO SAYS THAT "OFFUTT" IS "ONE OF THE MAJOR SPY CENTERS IN THE U.S." AND IS A BASE FOR CIA OPERATIONS, WHICH ARE CONDUCTED WITH AIRCRAFT IN THE GUISE OF AWACS PLANES. THE FULL TEXT, INFORMALLY TRANSLATED, FOLLOWS PARA FIVE BELOW.

3. (C) WITHIN THE PAST MONTH THE POST HAS NOTED FIVE APPARENT DISINFORMATION STORIES APPEARING IN THE DOMINICAN PRESS (SEE REFS). WHILE THESE PLACEMENTS HAVE CAUSED THE POST SOME CONCERN, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT, TO DATE, THE STORIES HAVE APPEARED ONLY IN FRINGE NEWSPAPERS WITH LITTLE READERSHIP (APPARENTLY VIA PAY-OFFS TO CORRUPT JOURNALISTS). THE MORE REPUTABLE MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS HAVE NOT PICKED UP ON THE STORIES

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AT ALL NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, ON ANY OF THE OTHER MANY STORIES WHICH ARE SENT TO THEM ON A DAILY BASIS BY NOVOSTI, ALASEI, PRENSA LATINA, AND THE NICARAGUAN EMBASSY IN SANTO DOMINGO. IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT THIS TYPE OF DISINFORMATION HAS MADE LITTLE HEADWAY SO FAR.

4. (C) NEVERTHELESS, THE POST IS SENSITIVE TO THE NEED TO COUNTER THIS MATERIAL IN A DISCREET AND EFFECTIVE WAY. ANY OVERREACTION WOULD GIVE THE STORIES WIDER DISTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP AND THUS PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE FABRICATING THEM. IN LIGHT OF THAT CONCERN, USIS SANTO DOMINGO INTENDS TO BEGIN A QUIET CAMPAIGN OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS TO RAISE THE DISINFORMATION AWARENESS LEVELS WITH DOMINICAN MEDIA CIRCLES. MEDIA CONTACTS WILL BE ADVISED, IN A QUIET, PERSONAL WAY, OF THE TYPES OF STORIES THAT ARE BEING DISSEMINATED AND THE TECHNIQUES THAT ARE USED TO PERPETUATE THEM. FOR THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, WE DO NOT INTEND TO REACT PUBLICLY TO ANY SPECIFIC STORIES AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IF USIA/PG AND INR/ID COULD PROVIDE USIS SANTO DOMINGO WITH ALL AVAILABLE MATERIALS (PREFERABLY IN SPANISH) RELATING TO THIS SUBJECT. PER REF B, WE ARE ALSO EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF CONDUCTING A WORLDNET ON THE DISINFORMATION THEME IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

5. BEGIN TEXT:

"RECENTLY, THE AMERICAN PRESS CARRIED AN INTERESTING ARTICLE ABOUT A U.S. AIR FORCE SERGEANT WHO DECIDED TO QUIT HIS JOB RATHER THAN CONTINUE PARTICIPATING IN ESPIONAGE FLIGHTS TO NICARAGUA.

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USIA P/G-ROMERSTEIN; TV/WPI AR-GLYCKMAN .

STATE FOR ARA/CAR; INR/ID DAS BAILEY

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PROP, US, DR  
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DANIEL COBOS IS THE NAME OF THIS AMERICAN SERGEANT, A  
MEMBER OF THE AIR FORCE WHO RECENTLY ASKED TO BE  
WITHDRAWN FROM THE FORCE SO AS TO DISCONTINUE  
PARTICIPATING IN SPY FLIGHTS OVER THE NICARAGUAN SKIES  
ABOARD AN RC-135 PLANE.

PROFESSOR BRUCE JOHANSEN, A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNICATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF NEBRASKA UNIVERSITY IN OMAHA, U.S., WROTE  
AN ARTICLE IN WHICH HE SAYS THAT SERGEANT COBOS TOLD HIM  
THAT EACH TIME HE MADE A FLIGHT, HE FELT AS IF HE WERE  
AT WAR AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE.

'I TRIED TO IGNORE THE REALITY OF MY JOB, BUT AS TIME  
WENT BY, IT BECAME MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH MY  
CONSCIENCE,' SAID COBOS.

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HIS DECISION GOT HIM IN TROUBLE WITH HIS SUPERVISORS SINCE NOT EVERYBODY CAN CONFRONT AND REFUSE TO OBEY ORDERS BY THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND OF THE PENTAGON, AND EVEN WORSE BY THE CIA. BUT THIS CASE GOES FURTHER THAN THAT BECAUSE BY REFUSING TO MAKE THE FLIGHTS AND ASKING FOR HIS WITHDRAWAL, THE EXISTENCE OF THIS ESPIONAGE IN NICARAGUA HAS COME TO LIGHT.

SERGEANT COBUS WAS BASED AT OFFUTT AIR BASE, A GENERAL HISPANIC QUARTERS SPECIALIZING IN 'TAPPING' RADIO CONVERSATIONS WITHIN THE NICARAGUAN BORDERS.

T SEEMS THAT AFTER LISTENING TO SO MANY SPANISH VOICES OF WOMEN, YOUNGSTERS OR CHILDREN, HE FELT REMORSE AND HE REMEMBERED HIS CHILDHOOD IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS. (THE VOICES) REMINDED HIM OF HIS ORIGIN, HIS ROOTS, HIS RACE. ALL OF THOSE VOICES, WHICH HE UNLAWFULLY HEARD, BROUGHT HIM TO HIS MEMORY IMAGES OF THE MANY CENTRAL AMERICANS WHOM HE KNEW AND WHO HAD EVEN HELPED HIM.

'I FELT LIKE A MERCENARY HIRED TO ATTACK HIS OWN PEOPLE. AFTERWARDS I BEGAN TO HAVE NIGHTMARES. I USED TO SEE MYSELF STANDING BEFORE A BLOODY RIVER, POURING MORE BLOOD IN THE RIVER WITH A BUCKET. WHEN THE DREAMS STARTED, I REALIZED THAT I HAD TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.'

SERGEANT COBOS WAS ASSIGNED TO SECURITY SQUADRON NUMBER 6949; HE'S 30 YEARS OLD, WITH AN IMPECCABLE BEARD, GOOD MANNERS -- HE SAID HE NEVER THOUGHT HE WOULD BE NEWS.

'PEOPLE SAY I'M A HERO AND THAT WHAT I'VE DONE REQUIRES A LOT OF COURAGE. I CAN SIMPLY ANSWER THAT I AM A MAN

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WHOSE CONSCIENCE FINALLY TOLD HIM 'ENOUGH'. WELL, LIKE NANCY REAGAN SAYS: JUST SAY NO AND THAT'S IT.

BEFORE RESIGNING, COBOS TOLD HIS FATHER, ALSO A PILOT WITH 28 YEARS OF SERVICE. HE THOUGHT OF INVOKING PROBLEMS OF CONSCIENCE AND APPEALED TO THE CITIZEN SOLDIERS ORGANIZATION, HEADQUARTERED IN NEW YORK, WHICH PROTECTS THE RIGHTS OF SOLDIERS WITHOUT RANK. COBOS' LAWYER PLANS TO CITE THE ILLEGALITY OF THE FLIGHTS, WHICH ARE IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. FURTHERMORE, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF THESE FLIGHTS HAVE NOT EVEN VIOLATED AMERICAN LAWS BECAUSE THEY WERE CONDUCTED WHILE THE BOLAND AMENDMENT WAS IN EFFECT.

THE INFORMATION WHICH COBOS GATHERED WAS HANDED OVER TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, TO THE CIA AND TO THE

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'CONTRAS' THEMSELVES.

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SERGEANT COBOS SAYS THAT HE'S NOT THE ONLY BILINGUAL  
DECODER REFUSING TO FLY OVR NICARAGUA AND DO THAT DIRTY,  
DISHONEST JOB; HIS COMPANIONS HAVEN'T RESIGNED BECAUSE  
THEY HAVE TO SUPPORT A FAM|LY.

IT IS KNOWN THAT THE OFFUTT BASE IS ONE OF THE LARGEST  
ESPIONAGE CENTERS IN THE WORLD AND THAT IN ORDER TO  
CAMOUFLAGE ITS ACTIONS, THE CIA UTILIZES BOEING  
PASSENGER AIRPLANES EQUIPPED WITH ELECTRONIC CONTROL  
DEVICES AND AWACS INTEGRATED INTO THE STRUCTURE OF THE  
AIRCRAFT.

THE TEAM IN WHICH COBOS WORKED IS MADE UP OF DECODERS  
BILINGUAL IN SPANISH, CHINESE, RUSSIAN, FRENCH AND OTHER

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LANGUAGES. THE TEAM HAD 12 YOUNG MEN.

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THE AIR FORCE IS PRESENTLY INVESTIGATING COBOS, AND HIS FRIENDS ARE ALSO BEING QUESTIONED, FOR WHICH REASON COBOS HAS REFUSED TO GIVE MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE COVERT OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE 'DEMOCRATIC AMERICANS'.

WHILE HIS CASE IS BEING INVESTIGATED BY THE APPROPRIATE OFFICES, COBOS, WITH A HAPPY FACE, SAYS: 'AT LAST I CAN SAY THAT I'M AT PEACE WITH MYSELF. AND BESIDES, I CAN LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR WITHOUT REMORSE'."

END TEXT. KILDAY

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

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